



EOC Celebrates 40 Years!



The Metropolitan Community College (MCC) Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) of Kansas City, Missouri has served target area residents since 1979. The program is 100% federally funded. Approximately 108,968 individuals, two-thirds of who were potential first generation and low-income have received services from EOC over the last 40 years. The program has seen many changes in education, financial aid, etc. throughout the past 40 years.

The one thing that has remained the same is the EOC mission to increase the number of adults enrolling into a postsecondary education program. This is accomplished by consistently providing free quality services to participants and continuously networking with community agencies, organizations and educational institutions. The EOC program and staff would like to thank MCC for it's institutional and staff support, the EOC Advisory Board members, and all of the many community collaborators. Most importantly, thank you to all of the EOC participants for allowing us to be part of your many successes and helping to make the EOC program a success! Here's to another 40 years!

FREE Services:

- Academic Advising
- Career Counseling
- College Admission Application Completion
- FAFSA Completion
- Financial Literacy Information
- Guidance on Scholarship Searches
- Defaulted Student Loan Counseling

FAFSA Changes Coming in 2020-2021

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step in applying for federal financial aid for college. The FAFSA for the 2020-2021 academic year requires applicants to use 2018 income information. After a major revamp of the 2018 IRS tax forms, a revised 1040 is now utilized and the 1040A and 1040EZ forms have been eliminated.

Therefore, changes made to the 2018 federal income tax return have impacted the 2020-2021 FAFSA application. Not only does this change the line numbers that income figures are drawn from for the FAFSA, this also changes the questioning to determine if an applicant can qualify for simplified *Expected Family Contribution* (EFC) formulas and potentially maximum grant eligibility. For instance, in prior years, those applicants eligible to file short forms (i.e. 1040A or 1040EZ) may not have had their assets factored into the eligibility calculation, because they did not have certain types of investments that required them to file the standard 1040 form. Now, making determinations related to simplified EFC formulas will require additional measures and a review of schedules filed in conjunction with the federal tax return.

This, in turn, may make it more difficult for individual students and parents to correctly answer eligibility-related questions on FAFSA and will require diligence to ensure students are completing their aid applications accurately. If you would like assistance with completing your FAFSA schedule an appointment with EOC (816) 604-4400.



Frederick Martin



In the spring of 2017, Frederick Martin came to the EOC after hearing about us through the Second Chance program. Mr. Martin had spent several years of personal development, studying law on his own. He was self-taught, even learning to utilize the intricate West Key Number Classification System for legal research.

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When I first met Mr. Martin, he had already written a book, entitled *After Conviction, What you can do before a lawyer is appointed*, and he was determined to go to school to become a paralegal. He knew so much of the material already, but recognized that a degree in the field would open the doors of opportunity. Starting this endeavor had its share of difficulties. While Mr. Martin and I explored funding options, roadblocks seemed to come up around every corner. After a number of letdowns, it appeared we had found a viable way forward. He interviewed with a program for grant funding and received the initial approval, but shortly thereafter, he was informed he did not fall within the age range for program eligibility. However, with tenacity and grace, he continued to push forward, pursuing every suggestion through our office, while also seeking out additional options on his own.

When encouraged to apply for a scholarship with KC Scholars, Mr. Martin jumped at the opportunity, preparing essays, seeking letters of recommendation and obtaining the required financial documents and academic transcripts. The day he was awarded, he called to share the good news and excitement about embarking on this next step of his journey! That was over 1 year ago~ Since that time, Mr. Martin started the paralegal program at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley. He has made the Dean's List twice for exemplary grades and continues to excel in the program, well on his way to seeing his dream of becoming a paralegal come to fruition. In addition to being a featured speaker at the EOC's 40th anniversary this year, he recently won a grant through the Rise Up, Get Started entrepreneurship competition by Determination, Inc. This grant provides an investment to further his business venture, IFAA Legal Services, Inc. After only a short conversation with Mr. Martin, one can see the passion he has for assisting people in need with their legal concerns.

It has been my pleasure to walk alongside Mr. Martin during this chapter of his life. It is an honor and a privilege to be involved in the lives of our students as they progress towards their desired careers and envision the positive change they will have on the world. Not only does Mr. Martin have the aptitude, he truly has the attitude and perseverance that will assist him in successfully reaching his goals. I look forward to our continued work together.

Jaime Alabi, EOC Academic Advisor

Alina Crouch

Alina Crouch, a participant of the Kansas City Educational Opportunity Center, was born in Moscow, Russia. She and her family moved to the United States when she was a year old. While she was attending Lincoln College Preparatory Middle School, she heard about the Kauffman Scholars college scholarship program. She was instantly interested and applied to the program. Among the many requirements of the program, she had to test into the program, and there was a component requiring her mother be highly involved as well. Alina gladly accepted an invitation to join the Kauffman Scholars program during her 7th grade year.

As a Kauffman Scholar while attending Lincoln College Preparatory Academy (High School), she met Camry Ivory, a former adviser of the Educational Opportunity Center. Camry was conducting a presentation at the Federal Reserve Bank where Alina interned. The two of them worked together throughout Alina's high school career.

Alina applied for over 18 colleges and received acceptance to many of them, but her dream school was Harvard. She graduated from Lincoln College Prep in 2015 as the Valedictorian of her class. She began attending Harvard the following fall and recently graduated in May 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in government.

She is currently applying for job positions and spending quality time with her family. Alina speaks four languages fluently: English, Russian, Spanish, French and a little Japanese. She plans to work for two years and then apply to law school. Alina's interests are in the areas of legal analysis, environment, finance, or space technology. Congratulations to Alina on her accomplishments and continuing successes.

Monica Jimenez



I first met Monica Jimenez when she was attending Alta Vista High School. Monica graduated from MCC-Penn Valley Community College and transferred to the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). Monica received the Bloch Scholarship to help with her attendance at UMKC.

I am proud to say that Monica will be graduating from UMKC May 2020. I am proud of Monica and all of her accomplishments.

Jan Rosenblum, EOC Counselor



Educational Opportunity
Center/Kansas City, MO

EOC Community Collaborations

Project Success



Is a (TRiO) Student Support Services (S.S.S.) Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Project Success provides academic and personal support to help students transition to four-year colleges or universities. Taking a holistic approach with each student, assisting each student in meeting their academic and personal goals while transitioning students to self-sufficiency. In addition to supporting students in overcoming low socio-economic, class, social, and cultural barriers as they continue their journey in higher education. Project Success serves 250 students per year and offers an array of services.

The services provided include: Individualized guidance ; Tutoring; Personal, Financial and Career counseling; Pathway for Scholars- focused areas for First Year and Transfer scholars; Assistance in choosing and applying to college; Workshops, informational sessions, and activities geared toward students' academic and personal development; In and out of state college visits; Assistance in applying for financial aid and scholarships, and a Computer Lab.

Project Success TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) has over 30 years of serving students at MCC-Penn Valley. TRiO students come from varied walks of life, and very often they encounter barriers in pursuit of their dreams. In spite of their differences, these students share a unifying desire to make sufficient academic progress towards their educational goals. Project Success TRiO Student Support Services program has been a valuable asset to the MCC-PV community. We have made a commitment to creating an environment in which the participants in the program can and will succeed.

Gabrielle Moore-Jones, MCC-Penn Valley, Program Director-TRiO Student Support Services

KC Scholars Adult Learners



For adults who are returning to college, finding funding can be challenging, but KC Scholars aims to make the financial burden of college easier.

Launched in September 2016, KC Scholars provides scholarship to low and modest income adults (as well as 9th and 11th graders) in the Kansas City area. Over the past three years, more than 400 Adult Learners have been awarded scholarships, including several EOC participants.

Adult Learner scholarships are valued up to \$5,000/year and are renewable for up to 5 years.

In addition to scholarship funding, Adult Learner awardees receive advising support from KC Scholars' Adult Learner Coaches, who guide students from enrollment to completion.

To be eligible for the Adult Learner Scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria: at least 24 years old as of August 31, 2020; resident of Jackson, Cass, Clay or Platte counties in Missouri or Johnson or Wyandotte counties in Kansas; not enrolled in college in Fall 2019; earned at least 12 college credits or have earned an associate's degree; low or modest income as determined by their FAFSA Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

The scholarship application opens **January 1, 2020** with a deadline of **February 28, 2020**. Applications and additional program information are available at <http://www.kcscholars.org>